AN

EXHORTATION

TO

Peace and Unity,

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

At St. LAWRENCE-JURY,

On *Tuesday* the 26*th* of *Novemb.* 1689.

By the Right Reverend Father in God, *GILBERT*,
Lord Bishop of *SARUM.*

LICENS'D,
Novemb. 29. 1689.

LONDON,
Printed for Ric. Chiswell, at the *Rose* and *Crown*
in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCLXXXIX.

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AN EXHORTATION TO Peace and Union: IN A SERMON PREACHED At St. *Lawrence-Jury*, &c.

ACTS VII. 16.

Sirs, ye are Brethren, Why do you wrong one to another?

THE open Assaults and the secret Practices of our Enemies are things that we are prepared for, we look for them, and guard against them; so that we are not surprized with them, nor unprovided when they appear. But the mutual Animosities of those who are all

united in the ſame common Intereſts, and that ought to be animated with the ſame Spirit, have ſomewhat in them that is more terrible, that carries the Characters of a Nation not capable of a Deliverance, but fitted for Deſtruction. This is at all times deplorable, but ſometimes it is ſo diſmal, that it is not eaſy to ſee a People in ſuch a State, when their Dangers are extreme; without concluding that ſo fatal a madneſs muſt be the Mark, as well as the Effect, of ſome Stroke from Heaven.

Who could have ſeen *Jeruſalem* in the State in which *Joſephus* deſcribes it, without concluding them Curſed of God? Beſieged by the greateſt Power that was then in the World, and languiſhing in Famine, yet in the intervals of the Attacks of their Enemies, giving one another no reſt, but divided into three great Parties, who were butchering one another, as oft as their Enemies gave them leiſure for it.

Somewhat not unlike this, tho in a lower form, is ſet forth in the words of my Text: The Poſterity of *Jacob* had endured a terrible Bondage in *Egypt*; and it was no wonder if while they groaned under ſuch an Oppreſſion, an *Iſraelite* and an *Egyptian* were engaged in a Quarrel, in which *Moſes* it ſeems took it for granted, that the *Egyptian* was in the Wrong, and ſo he killed him in the aſſiſtance of an injured *Iſraelite:* But it was an aſtoniſhing thing to him to ſee two *Iſraelites* fighting; therefore he who was the meekeſt Man in the Earth, ſtudied to ſoften both their Minds, with a Reproof that in very gentle words, ſet forth the madneſs of their Quarrel with great Authority.

They were Brethren, either as they were one People ingaged all in the ſame Intereſts, groaning under the ſame Miſeries, and wiſhing for the ſame common Deliverance; or as they were all initiated into the ſame Covenant with God, as being the Seed of *Abraham* according to the Promiſe made to him. But beſides this general Conſideration of their being *Brethren*, there *were* two ſpecial ones that enforced it in their preſent Circumſtances.

They were in Bondage to a ſtrong, an ingrateful, a perfidious, and a cruel Enemy; that forgetful of all the Services *Joſeph* had rendred the Crown, was not ſatisfied with condemning

ing them to an ignominious Slavery: but carried this to ſo brutal a degree of Cruelty, as to deſign the Murder of all their Male Iſſue, and even to oblige Parents to deſtroy the Fruit of their own Body. Now while they were under ſo terrible a Bondage, it ſeemed a very unnatural piece of Madneſs for them to have any Quarrels among themſelves. But beſides this, they had reaſon to believe that a Deliverance was approaching: the Time that was marked by Prophecy for the continuance of their Captivity was now almoſt expired; ſo they had reaſon to believe that God was to appear very ſpeedily, and to ſet them at Liberty: And therefore nothing was more contrary to that proſpect, than for them in ſuch a ſtate of things to engage into Quarrels and Animoſities, which might naturally have produced ſuch Conſequences, that they muſt have been very much diſabled from being the Inſtruments of Heaven in ſuch a glorious Work, as that which they had reaſon to conclude was now near at hand, ſince the Period of 430 Years was now expiring. Gen. 15. 13.

From the conſideration of the mutual Tie of their being *Brethren*, it was reaſonable to expoſtulate, as *Moſes* did, *Why do you wrong one to another?* Inſinuating that in ſuch Quarrellings the Wrong lay not only on the one ſide, but was mutual. Both were to blame, they wronged one another, and wronged the Publick beſides. But tho both were in the wrong, we ſee who was moſt ſo, even he that would not hear of a Reconciliation, or of the putting a ſtop to the Quarrel; he reproched *Moſes* with that Aſſiſtance, that he had given the Day before to an *Iſraelite* againſt an *Egyptian*: So enraged he was at the friendly Interpoſition of *Moſes* in the Matter, that he ſeems concerned for the *Egyptian* that was killed; a Publick Enemy being leſs hated than a Brother, when thoſe Domeſtick Feuds are once raiſed to any height; even a Reconciler becomes then more odious than an Alien.

This is the Account of the Occaſion on which theſe words were ſpoken, and of the words themſelves, and of the Effect they had. In the next place, let us conſider how far we may be concerned in them.

We have been engaged in a great and hard ſtruggle with open Enemies, as cruel and as treacherous as *Pharaoh* or the *Egyptians*

Egyptians ever were: We have overcome them, but now we are falling into mutual Quarrellings; ſome are whetting on their Spirits to Revenge, by the remembrance of paſt Errors, with relation to Civil Matters: Others are raiſing up thoſe Diſputes which have been already once and again ſo fatal to us, that they have given us often cauſe to wiſh that they had never been once named amongſt us; and after all theſe unhappy Conſequences that ſuch things have hitherto had, we are now again trying our Strength, muſtring our Forces, and raiſing within our own Minds, and in the Minds of all over whom we have any Influence, all the ſowerneſs and peeviſhneſs that is poſſible, which at any other time were an inexcuſable piece of Folly; but now it is a Madneſs that wants a Name. Let us then ſo far at leaſt take Breath in our Quarrel as to hearken to theſe words, and to examine what is imported by them; *Ye are Bretbren.*

This belongs to us, firſt, as we are *Engliſhmen*, all of the ſame Nation, under the ſame Laws, and the ſame Protection, ſhut up indeed in an Iſland, which as it ſeparates us from all the World, ſo it ſecures us againſt all the World. We were antiently a broken People, divided into many Kingdoms; and tho moſt of theſe were ſwallowed up many Ages ago, yet we were never brought all under one Head before the beginning of this Century. Our Climate, it is true, is none of the beſt; we have but a faint Sun, and the Product of our Soil cannot be compared with that of more Southern Regions; but our Ports and Rivers give us ſuch Advantages, that we ſend out both Colonies and Manufactures all the World over, and fetch home rich Returns; ſo that we have both Security and Wealth beyond any of our Neighbours.

It is a melancholy thing to live upon a Continent, and to be ſubject to the Chances of War, and to all the Depredations and Miſeries which follow all Wars; but it is yet much more unhappy to be in the Neighbourhood of that cruel and barbarous Enemy of Mankind, who having laid off all the tenderneſs of human Nature, and the regards that have been by a common conſent held ſacred in the moſt deſtructive Wars, executes whole Countries all at once: who after all the Wealth that can poſſibly be ſqueezed out of them, is drawn from them

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to the laſt Farthing for purchaſing a Security for their Houſes, Perſons and Cattel: Who, I ſay, after theſe Securities are ſo dearly paid for, ſends the final Order for deſtroying all, and burning, and waſting every thing without exception. I ſpeak not this to aggravate matters with words of Pomp; I ſay nothing but what they do daily practiſe, and of which I have ſeen many fatal Proofs in the Ruins of many great Towns, and large Countries, where the Words of *Joel* were literally accompliſhed by that devouring Army; the Country before them being like the *Garden of Eden*, but behind them like a *deſolate Wilderneſs*. Joel 2. 3.

But our Security from Enemies without us, is but half our Happineſs: We are ſafe at home likewiſe, having the bleſſing of a Government ſo tempered, that as we are not expoſed to the Fury of a levelling Multitude, nor the Confuſions of an Equality among Men, but have a Government that is ſtrong and firm enough to keep us in Order and Obedience; ſo we have the greateſt Bleſſing that can be found in Government in as high a degree as wiſe Men can deſire. Oh! the difference between us and ſome happier Climates, where Mens Eſtates and Liberties, and often their Lives are at the Mercy of mere Humour and Paſſion: where the Frowns of a Court can throw a Man in a moment from the moſt plentiful to the moſt miſerable Condition imaginable: where one raſh word is thought Crime enough for a perpetual Impriſonment, joined with all the Circumſtances of Rigor that can render it much more terrible than Death it ſelf; ſo that if ſuch Tyrants do not make many publick Examples of their Severity, their deſign in ſo doing ſeems only to be to lengthen out the Miſeries of ſuch as ſuffer at their hands, that ſo they may glut themſelves with a more laſting Revenge. I ſay nothing of thoſe terrible Impoſitions by which they eat out the Fortunes, and the very Strength of their Subjects, all Mens Eſtates by a quick Circulation are melted into the ſupport of their unjuſt Wars, or Extravagant Expences; and the poorer ſort muſt give at leaſt the half of their time to work, in order to the paying thoſe cruel Taxes, by which they grind their People. Their ruined Houſes, their ragged Cloaths, their hungry Looks,

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and their half-naked Children give evident Proofs of the Tyranny of those Governments that can render their People extremely miserable, in spite of all that abundance which Nature has set before them, while Millions of People are pining away in Want and Beggary, that so a few may surfeit themselves with all the Excesses of Fulness and Vice. This is a short hint of that which every one that has travelled abroad has seen in the richest Countries beyond Sea, God grant we may never see it nearer. But we know it has been the Language of all the Flatterers of lawless Power, that nothing can tame People, and make them quiet and obedient, but Poverty; whereas Plenty makes them haughty and mutinous, as if *Pharaoh's* Maxims had been to be derived to all his Successors in Tyranny: *Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, let us go.*

Exod. 5. 17.

We are all then Brethren, as we are *Englishmen* and *Freemen*, born under a Government that gives us all possible Securities for both Liberty and Property, the two chief earthly Blessings of human Nature, whose Persons can neither be restrained, nor punished beyond the bounds of Law; who can be charged with no Taxes but by their own Consent; and who can be subject to no Laws but what were prayed by themselves.

Happy Liberty! and happy Subjects! if they but knew their own Happiness. But as good Men love Liberty, so it is only wise Men that can value it and secure it; Fools part with it easily, and if they pay but a little for the Purchase of it, are apt to think it is dear bought. The *Israelites* in their March, when they saw not the abundance to which they had been accustomed in *Egypt*, wish'd themselves there again: So a voluptuous Nation that was over-set with abundance, and corrupted with Luxury, may think it was better with them when they were languishing away under that false appearance of Plenty, into a certain Ruin; than now, if their Prospect of Liberty is like for a year or two to force them to be a little more frugal and sober, less vain, and less prodigal: such a lessening of Expence to secure Liberty, will appear intolerable to those that have not sense enough to value it, nor

Exod. 16. 3.

Virtue

Virtue enough to ſtarve their Vices, that they may ſettle it upon themſelves and their Poſterities.

Our Neighbours in the *Low Countries* after they had felt the ſmart of Tyranny, reſolv'd either to recover their Liberty, or to periſh in the Attempt; and by a War of forty years continuance a ſmall Corner of the World maintained it ſelf againſt the greateſt Power then in *Europe*, and was reduced to a Miſery and Poverty, that nothing but an obſtinate Reſolution of being Freemen, or of periſhing, could have ſupported. In Concluſion, their Noble Deſigns were bleſs'd with Succeſs, they became the Wonder and the Envy of the World, the Arbiters of *Europe*, and the Supports of that very Power which then ſtudied to cruſh them; and to crown their Glory, the Inſtruments of giving us Liberty, as well as of ſecuring their own. And yet after all this, tho the Name of their Government has a greater ſound towards Liberty than our own, we are really the much freer People of the two, where every Man has a more open acceſs to a proportioned ſhare in the Government, than among them.

That ſmall Expence which we may borrow from our Pleaſures to ſecure our Liberty, will be ſoon repaid to us in that firm and ſettled Happineſs which is in our view. We run indeed the hazard of loſing it, and we deſerve that it ſhould be ſo, if we either throw it up, as not worth the holding, or let it be ſnatched from us by the great Raviſher of Liberty, and common Enemy to Mankind. The truth is, that Corruption of our Morals which is ſpread ſo univerſally over the Nation, gives us juſt cauſe of apprehending that we have not Virtue enough left to maintain Liberty: But that as the voluptuous and degenerate *Romans*, after they had ſhaken off *Cæſar*'s Tyranny, were too much vitiated to return to their Ancient Government, and ſo they quickly fell under a new, a worſe, and more laſting Tyranny; Thus we who have fallen ſo far from the Vertues of our Anceſtors, can never be able to maintain thoſe Rights which they derived to us, if we do not reſolve to return to their Vertues, and to cleanſe our ſelves of thoſe Vices which do deprave us. If we will unite

in maintaining this common Cauſe, and concur with every Man who on this occaſion is willing to ſhew himſelf an *Engliſhman*; if we will forget all our little Intereſts to mind this great One, and ſacrifice ſmall matters for the ſaving our All, then we will ſhew that we are Brethren, all born of one common Mother, and all equally concerned in her Preſervation.

But in this *ye are Brethren*, there is a cloſer relation implied; That as the *Jews* were all *Brethren* with regard to that Covenant to which they had a Right, as they were *Abraham's* Seed; ſo we Chriſtians are *Brethren*, as we profeſs the ſame common Chriſtianity, and look for the ſame common Salvation. As we are *Chriſtians*, or as we are *Proteſtants* we are *Brethren*, believing the ſame Goſpel, owning the ſame God, and the ſame Saviour, animated by the ſame Spirit, and hoping to live together in the ſame ſtate of Happineſs for ever. In all theſe reſpects we are *Brethren*; for that we are *Proteſtants*, imports no more but that we are *Chriſtians* who believe that holy Religion in the ſame Purity and Simplicity in which it was at firſt delivered to the World. If there happen to be any Diverſities among us about ſome leſſer things, we ought firſt to compare the Importance of that in which we agree, with that in which we differ; and if we find the one is vaſtly great, and the other is nothing in compariſon to it, then it is plain, that ſmall Differences muſt give place to the greater Points, in which we are at one; for all that act otherwiſe, ſhew clearly, that tho they do not think it decent to ſpeak out what they think, yet in their Hearts they undervalue the common Intereſt of the Proteſtant Religion in which we agree, but ſet a real Value upon indifferent matters, and are acted by the Heats and Animoſities of a Party, to which all other things give place. It was not only a certain ſign of Ruin to the *Jews*, but an infallible Cauſe of it, that while they were beſieged by the *Romans*, inſtead of conſulting together the Methods of their common Defence, they were broke into ſuch irreconcilable Feuds, that they no ſooner had a time of breathing given them by their Beſiegers, than they fell upon one another, ſo that they became their own moſt implacable

implacable Enemies. When the *Saracens* were too hard for the whole State of Christendom, the Eastern and Western Churches fell out about so trifling a matter, as whether the Bread in the Sacrament ought to be levened, or not: This first broke them, then some other matters not much more important, were found out to widen the breach, which had such Effects, that the Western Nations that ought to have supported the *Greek* Church and Empire, if not out of Charity to them, yet out of a due care of themselves, that they might be covered by such a *Barrier* from the *Turkish* Empire, lookt on, and saw them destroyed, and found themselves by that means exposed to a Power that has been so often formidable to *Europe*. Shall not the Madness and Miseries of others make us so wise as to fortifie our selves all we can, and to forget, if we cannot quite remove, the Occasions of our Differences? Shall an evil Spirit still prevail among us to the defeating all the Designs of Providence, and the crossing of all Attempts for Peace and Union; so that neither the Errors that all Men seemed lately to confess, nor the Promises which were then generally made, neither our late Distress, nor our present Dangers, can bring us to a sound Mind, or to a calm Temper, *that in this our day we may know the things that belong to our Peace.* It is indeed strange that we should not know them, when all the World besides us knows them. But as there is nothing that can tend to the strengthning of all Bodies so much, as their being united among themselves; so there is somewhat so peculiar to the Genius of the Christian Religion, that both obliges us to Peace and Love, and also disposes us to it, that we cannot give a more eminent proof of our ignorance of the main Design of our Great Master, and of his Blessed Doctrine, than to delight in everlasting Quarrelling, and to hate, and study to destroy those for whom Christ died. Nor does any thing defeat the design, nor stop the progress of Religion, so much as the Divisions of those who profess it; for these do divert all Men from better things, as much as they scandalize the World against those who promote them with so much zeal.

When the Reformation appeared first in the World, it made a mighty progress; whole States and Kingdoms embraced it so fast, that the Advances it made in the hands of a few Instruments, seemed to supply the want of Miracles, and look'd like a great one it self: but all on a sudden it came to a full stop, and now for above an hundred years it has gained little ground, but lost much. The chief reason that can be assigned for this, is, That those who embraced it, instead of carrying on their common Cause with an united Strength, have fallen a quarrelling among themselves about some Uncertain and Inconsiderable things. Those in *Germany* being broken about the manner of the Presence in the Sacrament; though all agree, that neither the one, nor the other Opinion has any relation, either to the Worship of God, or to any Practical Duty: Those in *Holland* have quarrel'd about the Decrees and Counsels of God, though both sides acknowledge that it is a Mystery past finding out: And we here in *England* have had a long and fierce Contest about things, which we all confess are indifferent in their own nature.

This Animosity works still so high among us, that many take fire upon the smallest steps that can be made towards the healing so great a Breach; and fill all places with Tragical Outcries, as if the Church of *England* were to be pulled down: while the chief Promoters of these Reports know well how false they are; and that instead of offering at any thing that can in any sort weaken our Church, every thing which has been endeavoured, must prove its Strength, as well as its Glory, if we are so happy as to weigh all in even Ballances. The things that are propos'd are of themselves desirable, though there should not be one Dissenter gained by them; and are such as will tend to the making all the parts of our Offices both more Unexceptionable, and more Edifying. But Distempers are far gone, when the Patient rages at the first mention of a Medicine. We have lost many happy Opportunities since the first beginnings of the Reformation among us, for the healing our Breaches: One is sorry to remember them, and wishes that such fatal Errors could be covered from

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the knowledge of all ſucceeding Ages for the ſake of the Church, and of thoſe who have governed it. But if we do again repeat former Errors, and let the preſent Advantages that we have now in our hands ſlip from us, what is to be ſaid upon it, but that this is of the Lord, who by it is puniſhing us for our other ſins, for our Remiſsneſs in our Duties, for our neglect of the Paſtoral Care, for our ſlackning that ſtrictneſs of Life which becomes our Profeſſion, for our Indulging our ſelves too much in Senſuality and Lazineſs, and for all thoſe other ſins, by which we have *departed from his Law, and have corrupted the Covenant of* Levi, *and made many to ſtumble at the Law; and that therefore God will make us become baſe and contemptible before the People*; and that all *our Flocks ſhall be ſcattered.* But we might hope for better things, if every one would put away all Prejudices, all Wrath, Anger, and Revenge; and would put on Bowels of Mercies and Kindneſs, remembring that we are Brethren. So that having purified our ſelves from Humour, Paſſion, Intereſt, and every thing elſe that may corrupt our minds, *unto the unfeigned love of the Brethren, we would reſolve to love one another with a pure heart fervently.* And if inſtead of the Pride of not yielding to one another in any thing, we ſhould rather engage into a holy Emulation of trying who could yield moſt for the healing of thoſe Wounds that have been ſo often opened, and that begin now again to bleed afreſh.

Mal. 2. 8, 9.

Jer. 10. 12.

1 Pet. 1. 22.

It is not the Differences themſelves that keep us aſunder, they are too Inconſiderable for that. It is a ſecret diſlike that we bear to one another. For as the *Greeks* and *Latins* could never have fallen out about ſo inconſiderable a matter as the Levening the Bread in the Sacrament, if the Diſpute about the Authority of the Biſhops of *Rome* and *Conſtantinople* had not embittered their minds: So our Subjects of Diſpute are only the Occaſions by which our Uncharitableneſs works; and if by bringing our ſelves to a more Chriſtian Temper, that hidden Diſeaſe were once cured, all the Symptoms of it would fall off of themſelves, and Men would grow aſhamed that they had ever ſpent ſo much Time, and

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ſo much Zeal about things which deſerve them ſo little. The Apoſtles who were full of this Divine Temper, after they themſelves had judged in a Diſpute of much more Conſequence than any is among us, yet were not only willing to let the *Jews* continue to do as they had wont to do, but even *to the Jews they became Jews*, that ſo they might gain them, not by a Spirit of ſervile Compliance, but by the enlarged Spirit of true Charity, which is of too great a compaſs, to be limited within any narrow ſub-diviſion. By this Spirit it was, that while St. *Paul* was a Priſoner for the Goſpel, ſome thinking to *add affliction to his bonds*, *preached Chriſt not ſincerely, but out of malice and envy*; yet ſo Triumphant was the Spirit of Univerſal Love, and of Zeal for the Honour of his Bleſſed Maſter, in him, that he rejoiced in this, That Chriſt was Preached. And then do we become his Followers, when by a degree of the ſame Spirit, we can ſo far raiſe our minds above all the narrowneſſes of a Party, that tho we were aſſured that thoſe Men who differ from us, were in the wrong, and had ill deſigns againſt us, yet we would conquer them in the Spirit of the Goſpel, and ſo overcome their evil with our good.

1 Cor. 9. 20.

Phil. 1. 15, 18.

Upon all ſuch occaſions we ought not ſo much to conſider what we owe to theſe with whom we have to do, as what we owe to our ſelves, to the Church, and to the ſucceeding Generation: So that if we can ſee how we may do that which may produce good effects at any diſtance of time from us, we ought to do it; though it ſhould not, like a Charm, have a preſent ſenſible operation; nor ought things that are offered at for Peace, be rejected, if they are in themſelves reaſonable, becauſe we cannot be aſſured before-hand, that thoſe in whoſe favour they are propoſed, will be gained by them: The Church will always gain both with God and Man, by offering at Peace as much as is poſſible, and as much as in her lies; nor are we to ſtop in a good thing, becauſe the effect is not certain; in ſuch caſes we may well truſt the Providence of God; and things that will be their own Apology, are never the worſe, if they are defeated by the ſowrneſs of unreaſonable Men; on the contrary, as the one ſide will have the

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more Glory, ſo the other will be the more inexcuſable, when great Conceſſions are frankly made, but unhandſomely rejected.

To crown all; We have ſtill one reaſon to perſwade us to reflect a little more frequently on our being *Brethren*, ſince we know our Enemies do it to purpoſe; their Bottom is an Abſolute Authority and Infallibility, that are maintained by Implicit Faith, and blind Obedience; which gives them indeed Advantages that our Principles do not allow us: yet it is an unaccountable Piece of the perverſeneſs of human Nature, that falſe Perſwaſions ſhould have ſo great an Influence, when certain Truths are ſo feeble; and when all the weight that our Saviour has laid on mutual Love and Charity, ſhall have ſo little force, while ſome falſe Notions work more certainly. Our Adverſaries have indeed among them many Differences, both in Doctrine and Practice, not to mention a vaſt Variety in their Rituals, that are much more important than any of thoſe are, about which we are divided; and yet as ſoon as they ſee the common Cauſe concerned, they can lay all theſe to ſleep, in order to their running down their Common Enemies: but we by a fatal obſtinacy continue our Diſputes, and heighten our Animoſities, when our Enemies are in our Bowels, ready not only to take advantage of our Paſſions, but to devour us; while we, inſtead of ſecuring our ſelves from them, ſeem only to be ſet on devouring one another. This is from God, and gives us a melancholy Proſpect of it ſelf; but a much more melancholy one, when we have reaſon to look upon it as a Judgment of God on us for our Sins, and as a forerunner of our deſtruction. We ſeem now to be in the like State with that in which *Jeruſalem* was, when our Saviour ſaid of her, *How often would I have gathered thee under my Wings, as a Hen gathereth her Brood, but thou wouldſt not!* Luke 13. 34.

This leads me to conſider the firſt Circumſtance in which the *Iſraelites* were, that made it more neceſſary for them to remember that they were *Brethren*, ſince they were then in *Egypt*, in bondage to a Cruel, Treacherous, and Ingrateful Tyrant,

Tyrant, who had both Strength enough to maſter them, and Rage enough to deſtroy them. It is true, ſuch has the Goodneſs of God been to us, that we are not now in *Egypt*; but we were lately very near the being brought under that Yoke: And if we do not manage the happy Opportunity that is now in our hands, we have reaſon to apprehend that we ſhall quickly fall again under it. The Scene that has been lately acted in *France*, and *Savoy*, has given us ſufficient warning of what we ought to expect when we fall under ſuch *Pharaohs*, who will neither remember *Joſeph*, nor the moſt ſignal Services that can be done them, nor have any of the tenderneſſes of Humanity, not to ſay of the Compaſſions of Chriſtianity, but who will by a ſlow Oppreſſion eat out the Eſtates, and ſpoil the Houſes of thoſe they call *Hereticks*, and give them all the vexatious Diſquiet that they can contrive; and then, when all is conſumed, well ſeparate the neareſt Relations, and throw them into terrible and noiſome Priſons, without any regard to Age or Sex, to Sickneſs or Infirmity: And the very attempt of flying away from ſo dreadful a Miſery, will be made a Crime to be puniſhed by the greateſt Severity to which Men can be adjudged; to be chain'd to a Bank, and to tug at an Oar, in the moſt uncomfortable State of Life that is imaginable. This is what many thouſands in *France* have ſuffered, and ſtill do ſuffer; and has driven vaſt Multitudes out of their Country, from their Dwellings and Families, naked almoſt, and deſtitute of all things: You have ſeen ſo many crying Inſtances of this Cruelty, that it is not neceſſary to enlarge further upon it; and you have received, and relieved them with ſuch a bountiful Hand, and ſo tender a Charity, that you have reaſon to hope that there is a Bleſſing reſerved for you, proportioned to the Labour of Love you have ſhewed, who have miniſtred to ſo many of our perſecuted Brethren, and ſtill do miniſter.

We here had formerly reaſon to have looked for no better uſage; we know their Church is Uniform in her Proceedings againſt Hereticks; the Spirit and Principles are the ſame every-where; ſo we had no reaſon to have expected

pected to be exempted from the Fate of others, if we had been delivered over to them whose tender Mercies are cruel. We saw that they remembred not *Joseph*, not only in the Age after he was dead, but that immediately after the greatest Service that could be done, and the most solemn Promises that could be made, all was forgotten. And if there appeared at any time any relenting, it was like that in *Egypt*, for when *Pharaoh* felt the weight of the Divine Displeasure, he was so far wrought on, that he was willing to let the People go; but that Terrour was no sooner over, than his Heart was hardned; so that his good Temper went off, and all his Promises were forgotten. Some perhaps are so foolish as to imagine, that present Misfortunes may have wrought a Change somewhere, and that they now see past Errors, so that they would not venture to fall again into the same Fomes that have proved so fatal to them. But yet such Persons ought to consider that *Pharaoh* was *Pharaoh* still, and would be so still, after all the Changes of Fortune through which he could pass; Obligations and Engagements will be but feeble things. And we must expect to be the most miserable Nation under the Sun, if after the Escape that we have made, we should again fall back into the same Hands, not only the old Crime of Heresy must be brought against us, but our Presumption in daring to set our selves free, and to accept of the Deliverance which God has so wonderfully wrought for us, would be thought the greatest of Crimes, and be aggravated by all that could be invented to make it look odious. We have in such a Case the most deplorable State of Misery imaginable to look for, all the Hardships of Prisons, all the Cruelty of rough Treatment, and after the lengthned Misery of ill Usage, such a terrible Death as they may think will give us the most exquisite Misery; so that all the Ease and Pleasure we might hope for, should be to be speedily delivered by a quick Execution out of their Hands; their Temper and Principles are of themselves cruel enough, but when these are sharpned by Resentment and Revenge, then new Contrivances of Cruelty are to be expected.

This is that *Egypt* out of which we are delivered, I wish I could say delivered. Alas, *Ireland* is not! but is still in Bondage with her Children, and like to be a long Scene of Blood and Misery, nor can our Deliverance be compleat till that is perfected; and tho we here are not at present in their Power, yet it is but too evident that many wish we were. If these were the avowed Members of that Body, it ought not to surprize us, but that many who seem zealous against it, should yet by their whole Conduct be carrying us back thither, is more amazing. Can any Man be so void of Understanding, as to forget so soon what was so lately done? or imagine that any Change in the Affairs of our Enemies, can have changed either their Principles or their Hearts, unless it be to the worse? And yet after all this there are not a few, that say plainly, *Would to God we were in* Egypt *again, for it was then better with us than it is now.* Others are not so sincere as to speak out, but their Actings speak for them. Some are uneasy, because they can no more persecute their Brethren. Others, because they can no more insult over their Neighbours. Some are afraid of suffering a little of the great deal they deserve: While, on the other hand, others are acted with another Extreme of Fury, and under the pretence of punishing past Errors, seek only to gratify their own Revenges, and so drive others to the common Folly of all that are in any present Danger, to wish for any thing that may deliver them from that, how fatal soever it may prove afterwards.

These unruly Agitations of Mens Minds on both hands, are the very Plague that our Enemies ought to wish to us, that while *Pharaoh* pursues, we may stand still quarrelling with one another till he can overtake and destroy us; and thus, instead of securing our selves against the common Enemy, we create many new Ones among our selves, and expose the Whole to the Rages of those who can have no Mercy.

The Second Circumstance of the Affairs of the *Israelites* was, That they were upon the Point of being redeemed out of their Bondage, and being made one of the most Glorious Nations that ever was: The Prophecy relating to it was near the assigned Period; and it seems it had begun already to be understood, that *Moses* was to be the Person to be employed in it; for we find here that he imagined they had known it, which shews that it was got even then into many Hands. And now if we turn this towards our Selves, here is a Dawning to a Happiness, and a Deliverance begun, that carries with it all that is desirable to us. Whether this is a beginning of that great Restitution of all Things, which is supposed to be held forth in Prophecy, and to be near its accomplishment, is that which I will not undertake to affirm; but this is certain, that since the first beginnings of the Reformation, the Face of the Times never looked so bright towards that blessed Work as it does at present. There was never such a happy Conjunction of Interests among those who professed it as there is at present; nor were ever these Kingdoms, and the *United Provinces*, in such a close Conjunction as they are at this day. And on the other hand, the great Persecutor of Protestants has, by his Violence and Injustice, raised against himself so strong an Alliance of Princes of the same Religion, that it is visible the Signs of the Times give us all the grounds of hope that we can propose to our selves; nor can any thing disappoint all this, but first our Sins, that may provoke God to appear against us; and then our mutual Animosities and Quarrellings, that may distract us at Home. If Men will forget their present Danger, and only think of former Provocations, if both Sides are studying to aggravate Matters one against another, and seeking and improving all the Advantages they can find; if the repeated Interpositions of him, to whom, under God, we owe our present Quiet, and our late Deliverance, cannot inspire us with softer Thoughts in, I say, we continue firm to these ill-temper'd Resolutions, What must the Conclusion of all this be, but the Ruin of Religion, and the loss of Liberty? We will

appear to all the World, as well as to all ſucceeding Ages, the moſt unthinking, and the moſt blinded Nation under Heaven, the leaſt ſenſible of Religion, and the leaſt capable of Liberty; that have not the regard due to the One, nor the ſenſe and the vertue neceſſary for the Other; and that after all the noiſe we have made about Religion, that we have none at all; and that after all the Concern we have ſhewed for Liberty, we neither deſerve it, nor can maintain it. Upon our Behaviour at preſent depends all the Proſpect that, humanly ſpeaking, we can poſſibly have of our Religion's not being wholly extirpated, at leaſt in all theſe Parts of the World. If in this Fermentation and Criſis the Deſign miſcarries, there is nothing ſo black and diſmal, as that which we ought to look for. We will be deſpiſed by all our Enemies, as much as we are now hated by them; we will fall unregarded and unpitied; and if ſuch a Miſery is reſerved for us, we ſhall have one aggravation of it, that as the damned in Hell are ſuppoſed to curſe and reproath one another; ſo if we fall again into a ſtate of Perſecution, both Sides will be reproaching, and next to curſing one another for it. Weaker Minds will be ſtruck with this, that the miſcarriage of ſo great a Deſign, that was carried on ſo far with ſuch unlook'd for Succeſſes, looks as if God had only let Things go ſo far of our Side, that all the World might ſee in our miſmanagement of them, that we are under a Curſe which no Succeſſes could remove, and under a Madneſs that was paſs'd all Cure. What proſpect can we have, or whither can we ſo much as think of flying, if our preſent Settlement ſhould be overturn'd? The view is ſo terrible, that if that ſhould happen, the Thing which next to it a good Man would chiefly fear, muſt be his own outliving it, and not periſhing in it; ſince after ſuch a Miſcarriage, nothing beſide a Miracle could retrieve that, without which Life would be a perpetual Burden to a wiſe or a good Man. Theſe are not Words of Pomp, nor the undue Aggravations of a Miſery, which can never be fully expreſſed in words, and which I pray God may never be felt indeed by us.

At such a time as this, is it fit for us to raise up into our Thoughts the unreasonable remembrance of all the Errors and Follies into which the Weakness and Credulity of some may have led them, who yet as soon as they saw how they had been deceived, seem'd sensible of former Faults, and stood firm afterwards? If, I say, all these things are to be canvassed with rigor, how can it be hoped that Mens Minds should ever be settled or freed from those Apprehensions that may tempt them to think of securing themselves at any rate? And on the other hand, Men whose Passions have once so fatally misled them, as not only to be concerned in the shedding of innocent Blood, but in the exposing the whole Nation to be destroyed, ought not to suffer the like Passions to return afresh upon them, to the keeping up and heightning our Differences, and to the reviving our Animosities, by a pretended Zeal for the Church, which they have once already endangered to the highest degree; it were more modest and becoming in them to be silent and retired, than to study still to trouble our Waters, and to sow the Seeds of new Dissensions among us, and so commit new Faults instead of repenting of old Ones: all these indecent Errors of all sides concur, to let us see how far we are yet out of the way, and give us reason to conclude, that our Deliverance was too quickly wrought for us; that we were not long enough in distress, and that we are not yet wholly purged from our Dross, but that we must go through a fiery Trial, which will either purge us more entirely, or consume us quite.

But if after all that Heat which we are raising in our selves, or in others, we would grow so calm and so wise, as to remember that we are Brethren, this would quickly give us another view of Things, and make us see our Madness while we are so much worse than the two *Israelites* in my Text, who did *wrong one to another*, for we wrong our selves, and our common Concerns in the Wrongs that we do to one another. Are not the hard Speeches we throw out, and the severe Words that we fasten on one another, Injuries of very high Nature? We first hate one another, and then

study,

ſtudy to render one another as odious, both to our ſelves, and to all the World, as poſſibly we can: We are poſſeſs'd with a Spirit of Jealouſy and Diſtruſt, which makes us eaſily believe all the Ill that we can hear of thoſe that differ from us, and to create to our ſelves groundleſs Apprehenſions and Fears; and when ſuch an ill Temper has once corrupted us, we are eaſily led to all the Injuſtices that do follow Parties and Diviſions on the account of Religion.

God be thanked for it, that there is an end put to all Perſecution in Matters of Conſcience; and that the firſt and chief Right of Human Nature, of following the Dictates of Conſcience in the Service of God, is ſecured to all Men amongſt us; and that we are freed, I hope, for ever of all the Remnants of the worſt part of Popery that we had too long retained, I mean, the Spirit of Perſecution. If this gives uneaſineſs to any, it ſhews that their Eye is evil, becauſe the Eye of our Legiſlators has been good towards thoſe, who tho they may be miſtaken in their Notions, yet have ſtill the Rights of Men and of Chriſtians. But after all this it is to be remembred, that Men may be ſtill Perſecutors, tho they are not able to perſecute any longer, according to our Saviour's charging the Guilt of intended Sins on thoſe who never acted them: for as long as we entertain Hatred and Malice in our Hearts, and wiſh that it were in our Power to do hurt to others; ſo long we become guilty before God, and ſo do wrong to our ſelves, tho we are not in a condition to do them any; but if we do them all the wrong we can, we ſhew what our Tempers are, and that we would do more if it were in our Power. If we love to keep up old Differences, or to create new Ones; if we will continue to make the Terms of Communion with us as ſtrait as poſſibly we can, and ſhut out all Perſons, as much as in us lies, from joining Labours with us, becauſe they do not in all Things think as we do: If we will by turns imploy all the Intereſt we have in any Turn of Government that is kind to us, to do wrong to others, either by loading them with falſe Accuſations, by aggra-

aggravating ſome leſſer Matters, or by an undue proſecution of real, but repented of Faults; All theſe are the ſeveral Inſtances, in which an injurious Temper ſhews it ſelf; and while ſuch things are among us, we are under the Guilt that is charged on theſe *Iſraelites* in my Text, who tho they were Brethren, yet did Wrong one to another.

While we are ſo liberal in throwing out of Lies and Slanders, or at leaſt, while we do ſo eaſily believe them, and ſo willingly report them, we ſhew that whatſoever our want of Power to do Miſchief may be, yet that our Inclinations are ſtill full of Malice and Wickedneſs. And while we are under the power of ſuch ill Tempers, we are far enough from the Bleſſedneſs of Brethren that dwell together in Unity: Indeed this Diſeaſe is gone too far to admit of any other Cure, but what muſt come down from Above from the God of Love, through the effuſion of the Spirit of Love and Peace.

The Corruption that is rooted in our Natures, is too deeply fixed there to be cured any way but by an Interpoſition of a Divine Power. We ſee that neither the conſideration of Reaſon nor of Intereſt; neither the ſenſe of Honour, nor the apprehenſion of Danger, are ſtrong enough to prevail over the Prejudices of our Education, or thoſe angry Impreſſions which we have ſo long cheriſhed in our ſelves and in others, that perhaps we are now ſcarce Maſters of them; and therefore ſince the Diſeaſe has gone ſo deep, we muſt look up to him who alone can cure it; We muſt all conſider, that ſuch an Evil Spirit prevailing among us at ſuch a time, is a plain Indication of God's Anger that is kindled againſt us. Therefore before this proves our Ruin, let us all turn to God with our whole Hearts, and repent us of the Evil of our ways, and cry mightily to him, That ſo he may Ariſe, and Save, and Deliver us, who by our Sins and our Diviſions are brought ſo very low, and who muſt yet fall into the moſt abject and miſerable State poſſible, if God do not bleſs us with a healing Temper, and with healing Counſels, That ſo we may go on to Perfection, and

Compleat

Compleat those Great Things which God has begun to wo
for us, and in which we our selves have fatally stopt
Course of his Mercy to us, and that we may both live
Christians, and love as Brethren; That the God of Lo
and Peace may delight to dwell among us, and bless u
That this Church may become more and more, that whi
she truly is, *The Praise of all the Churches, and the Joy of t
whole Earth*; and that every one of us in our own particul
may at last come to dwell in those Regions above, whe
all are made perfect in Love: which may the God of Lo
grant us, for the sake of him that loved us, and gave hi
self for us; to whom be Glory and Dominion for eve
Amen.

FINIS.